Credit to African Nations

3171. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Govt, have promised to extend $ 500 million in concessionary credit to eight African nations;

(b) if so, whether Goverments had held talks with any of the African nations in this regard;

(c) if so, the details discussed in the meeting; and

(d) the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) I held meeting with Ministers of 8 African nations on July 3, 2005.

(d) The Government of India conveyed its approval for a concessionary credit under the TEAM-9 programme for some of the projects submitted by the 8 African nations *i.e.* (i) Senegal (ii) Ghana (iii) Chad (iv) Mali (v) Burkina Faso (vi) Cote d'lvoire (vii) Guinea Bissau (viii) Equatorial Guinea.

The Ministers of these countries were advised to follow clear and transparent procedures in selecting the Indian companies that would execute the projects approved under Indian lines of credit.

Submission of Passport Applications

†3172. SHRI VASANT CHAVAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that it has been made mandatory to take prior date through internet for submission of application for new passport;

(b) if so, whether this rule is applicable in Mumbai only;

(c) if so, whether there is any other facility provided to the person not able to use the internet or the uneducated person; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefore and the time expected to be consumed for the issuance of new passport now?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.